

RECOMMENDATION FOR CASADY RENAMING

JULY 9, 2013

On behalf of the Naming Committee of the New Casady Building Planning Group, the Education Committees of the African American Leadership Forum, the Education Brain Trust, and the Iowa Chapter of the NAACP, along with a myriad of friends, families and neighbors from various associations and organizations, we submit to the Board of Education for the Des Moines Independent School District, a proposal to rename the Casady Education Center, aka/or previously known as Casady Alternative School located at 1801 – 16th Street.

In compliance with the District's Series 700, Code 740, Naming/Renaming of School/Facility policy, we recognize and understand the particulars of the requirements and submit this request knowing that the school board is responsible for the naming/renaming of all schools and school facilities. As involved citizens and viable co-sponsors, we are encouraging the board president, as directed by the policy, to appoint a three-person committee of the board to submit two names to the board for the renaming of the Casady Education Center. The New Casady Building Planning Group is recommending that Casady be reassigned a dual designation as listed below.

Our recommendation is that the name be changed to:

Jesse Franklin Taylor Education Center

Casady Building

1. Biographical/Other Data*:

Jesse Franklin Taylor was born in 1925, and was raised in the core city portion of Des Moines. He was educated in the Des Moines Public Schools and ran track for North High School. He was also a home owner at 1612 Lincoln Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa located in the Mondamin Presidential Neighborhood. He passed away on June 10, 2012 and Home Going Services were held for him on June 14th. Family, political leaders and friends celebrated Jesse's active and most illustrious life at St. Paul A.M.E. Church where a Masonic Ceremony was administered. He was memorialized with Military Honors, at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, on June 18, 2012.

2. The significance of this name:

Jesse Franklin Taylor was involved with many community boards and commissions and served on a plethora of governmental and non-profit organizational boards, including Mid City Vision and other Enterprise Community related developments. Jesse was a 50 year plus member of North Star #2 and a 33° member of the William Frank Powell Consistory #46 of Des Moines, IA. He was the Commander of [VFW](#) Post #12105.

True to his commitment for justice, Jesse was a lifetime member of the NAACP.

He played an influential role launching the Forest Avenue Library Campaign, as well as, founding the John R. Grubb YMCA presence in the heart of the city. In 2005, after 35 years of officiating for the Drake Relays, Jesse was received into the Drake Relays Wall of Fame. In 2009, he was inducted into the Iowa African American Hall of Fame. Jesse was also a charter member of the National Black Child Development Institute- Des Moines Affiliate and was an avid supporter of early childhood education on up to youth development and teen employment.

He enjoyed people and liked to discuss The Bible, National matters, International affairs, labor relations and just about any other topics of timely concern.

3. **Justification and Compelling Reasons for the Nomination:**

We believe the facility should be so named for several reasons: (1) The Jesse Franklin Taylor Education Center signifies a tribute to a neighborhood man child who grew up to do great work for his community and country; (2) Within the neighboring communities, designations have been overwhelmingly named for local area females: Griffin, Cheatom, Davis, Edmunds; now is a prime opportunity to lift up an African American Male; (4) Regardless of color or ethnicity or gender, all youth need the exposure to the gifts and contributions made by African Men; it is only through the fostering of positive images and inclusion that the stereotypes will be casted away so that a new generation emerges better informed and stronger in terms of multi-cultural relations; and (5) The dual designation for the **Jesse Franklin Taylor Education Center: Casady Building** retains the rich history of the school and secures its legacy as a continued beacon for the residents and a **jewel of a school** in the heart of the City.

4. **Consideration for the Moral Character of the Individual.**

Jesse served in the [U.S. Navy](#) and was a [World War II](#) Veteran. He retired from Meredith Publishing Company after 39 years. He worked many years at the Des Moines Municipal Airport as a skycap and in countless ways, he was a great ambassador for the City of Des Moines. Many looked for him when arriving or departing from the Airport. Anyone who met Jesse was heartened by his captivating conversation, care and concern for all.

5. **Broad acceptance in a multi-cultural society.**

On June 5, 2013 during the lunch hour at the Forest Avenue Senior Citizen's Community Center. a poll was conducted regarding the renaming of Casady to the Jesse Franklin Taylor Education Center. There were 26 people who signed their names, including the two committee surveyors. Some comments about the renaming were: "It's a wonderful idea; That's a good way to honor Jesse; and Yeah I'll sign for Jesse." Even the few who weren't that familiar with Jesse, signed their names after reading over a brief bio that was passed out. Overall, many of those gathered that day for lunch knew Jesse well, since the Center was one of the places that he spent a lot of socialization time. Signatures and phone numbers can be provided if needed.

On Thursday evening, June 6, 2013, the final community meeting in the old Casady building was held. Each committee presented their updates. The naming/inspiration wall committee also presented an update. This report included feedback from the survey conducted. The two committee surveyors were welcomed as they explained to the group about their research. Their efforts were met with great enthusiasm for Mr. Taylor's name to be a part of the new educational center. The community members present at the Thursday meeting also shared stories and support for Mr. Taylor's name to be the headliner with an additional request that the name Casady Building be retained to preserve its historical significance to the community.

6. **In naming a school after a person, that person shall have been deceased at least three years.**

While Jesse Franklin Taylor has only been deceased one year, we are asking the Board Members to either waive, amend or draw up an exception to Series 700, Code 740, Naming/Renaming of School/Facility policy. The time is now. He is the appropriate namesake and what a glorious grand opening it will be to have a home town hero named for a school in his own neighborhood.

Jesse Franklin Taylor (1925 - 2012)

